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### **Report on the Okinawa Trip in Attendance to the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of The Japan Society for International Development**

The conference of the Japan Society for International Development gave me insights on how basic education in other developing countries like Ethiopia, Yemen, and Mongolia. Coming from the Philippines, which is also a developing country, it was very surprising to note that gender equality of availing basic education is still a very major issue especially in Yemen. Coming from the country where advocacy for gender equality is quite strong and where the government's major agenda is education for all, hence, making basic education, both primary and secondary, free, this comes quite interesting. It is promising to note though that these countries are making big leaps in their basic education program.

Another novel point that I learned from the conference is the big difference between a tropical and a temperate country. Sunshine is sometimes taken for granted in the Philippines, but reading the poster about Sustainable Education in Mongolia, where delivery of education is almost always hampered by the fierce winter with temperature going as low as  $-51^{\circ}\text{C}$ , hot days would be more appreciated. It is very encouraging that despite these obstacles, teachers and the Mongolian government as well as other foreign donors are striving hard to effectively provide education to children from far flung regions of Mongolia. Hearing about how active the non-government organizations are in Ethiopia in providing basic education and also in their assistance to the local government to provide such, gives assurance that education is considered an important service in developing countries. I believe that acknowledging the role of education in a country's development is very important, not only to improve economy but also to boost individual's confidence.

### General Impression:

The trip was great! It was quite refreshing to be in a temperate place after being in cold Tokyo for a while. The lectures were informative, though, only a few were delivered in English and no simultaneous interpretation was provided. I would have wanted to listen to some more lectures if it were provided in English. Kokusai Street is very, very nice, with a lot of interesting and unusual trade like the snake wine. The tour on the last day was great. Quite interesting to observe that Okinawa is in some way different from the culture of Tokyo.

Our coordinator, Mr. Jun Hasegawa was very accommodating. He had come out of his way to assist us in every way and made our study tour very enjoyable and informative. To JICE and ICU, I am very grateful for the trip provided. It was an experience that will always be remembered.